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RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP



A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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Vol. 11

January 1943

No. 124

HOLIDAY GREETINGS TO ALL

and

GOD BLESS THOSE WHO HAVE
LEFT THE FOLD, AND JOINED
THE GREAT BEYOND.

John J. Maroney — Thomas Kelly — Wm. L. Beck — Jim Cummins — C. Young
Frank T. Fries — John A. Bregnicky — Winfield Robbins — George C. Jenks
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J. FENIMORE COOPER

By Herman Pitcher

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In the year 1769 a large tract of land around Lake Otsego, in central New York State, was bought by George Crogan for the purpose of erecting a white settlement. He failed in his enterprise and in 1785 Judge William Cooper bought it. He had come from Burlington, N. J., two years after James Fenimore, the eleventh of his family of twelve children, was born on September 15, 1789.

They had come to the settlement shortly after the American Revolution. Here a log house was built for them, for this was on the frontiers of civilization. Judge Cooper was of English and Quaker stock and his wife, Elizabeth Fenimore, was of Quaker and Swedish ancestry. It is presumed that their children inherited from them a rugged constitution.

We are not concerned about the other Cooper children, our interest being centered in the next to the youngest. From early childhood James Fenimore roamed

"..... the forests primeval
Where the murmuring pines and the
hemlocks
Bearded with moss and in garments
green

Indistinct in the twilight stand like
Druids of old."

Here he learned the ways of its denizens and of the Indians, too. There were many Indian tribes whose settlements were not so far from the white folk settlements but that they exchanged their plunder of the woods and fields and streams for other necessary supplies. There were hostile tribes, of course, and the white settlement was in danger of attack. Whether this ever took place I do not know. But with the friendly ones the boy, James Fenimore, talked and grew to know their ways. As he hunted and fished and swam in the Otsego Lake and in the Susquehanna River which flows out from it, he was absorbing many things of which he would write in later days, altho at that time there seemed no promise nor any likelihood that he would be the famous author of future times. He loved the hills and valleys, too, as well as the lake and river.

From a wilderness settlement the surrounding fields around the Cooper home developed into a village and was named Cooperstown in honor of Judge Cooper, a man of sagacity and leadership whose prominence led him to be elected to represent his district in Congress.

We learn from biographical sketches that after leaving the public schools of the village, J. Fenimore was sent to Albany, N. Y., the capital of the state, where he was especially tutored by the rector of a church in that place. In 1803 he was enrolled as a student at Yale College, but not liking the confinement to study which gave him little time for out-of-doors recreations, he became accustomed to neglect his lessons. Persisting in this, the faculty was finally obliged to expel him. J. Fenimore himself probably did not care, but it was said that Judge Cooper resented the action.

This led to the youth's going to sea as a sailor. Here his dreams, far away from the forests and fields, took another turn, with the prospect of an admiral's cocked hat and fame in the future. However, all did not go well in his life then, for adverse criticism was directed toward him; people pointed to the Tory tendencies of his wife's family—for on January 1, 1811, at the age of 21 years, he had married a daughter of John Peter DeLancey, a conspicuous Tory of that time. This charge of the lack of patriotism, after the War of 1812 broke out, caused young Cooper to resign from the navy. Many years later he wrote a "History of the Navy of the United States."

Having liked the country so much as a boy, and now faced with necessity of earning a livelihood, Cooper and his wife spent the next ten years in what is now Westchester County in New York State where the old DeLancey home was located. Some biographers refer to his life here as that of a "gentleman farmer."

Cooper's daughter, Susan Fenimore, wrote many years later: "my father pl'ed the flute in those days. He was greatly interested in agricultural matters and belonged to an agricultural society of the county. He was also an aide-de-camp of Governor Clinton, of New York, with the rank of Colonel. More than once, we little girls had the pleasure of admiring

him in full uniform, blue and buff, cocked hat and sword, mounted on Bullhead, before proceeding to some review."

Cooper was always a great reader. Military works, travels, biographies, histories, and novels were among his favorites. He and his wife often read aloud during some of the evenings. It was while he was reading an English novel—it is thought one by Mrs. Opie—that he threw it down with the remark, "I could write a better book than that, myself!"

Mrs. Cooper laughed at the idea, for her husband had often complained at the necessity of writing letters. However, he began work on a novel. Susan Fenimore Cooper wrote of this: "He soon became interested, and, amused with the undertaking, drew a regular plot, talked over the details with our mother, and resolved to imitate the tone and character of an English tale of the ordinary type. After a few chapters were written he would have thrown it aside, but our dear mother encouraged him to persevere. 'Why not finish it? Why not print it?' This last idea entertained him greatly. He usually wrote in the drawing-room, and after finishing a chapter, always brought my mother in to hear it...."

The name of the book was "Precaution," and when it was published many people thought it had been written by Anne DeLancey, Cooper's wife's sister, who was living in England. Altho some biographical sketches of Cooper report that this novel was successful, most of them say that it was a failure. It dealt with the social life of the English nobility. However, its success or its failure spurred its author to write another. A certain Governor Jay, of New York, was one of the audience who had listened to the first reading in manuscript form of "Precaution" at the Jay home. An anecdote which Gov. Jay had told him about a Revolutionary spy supplied Cooper with material for his next book. This was "The Spy," and its subsequent success is a part of American literary history. Susan has written that while her father was at work on the story, he often invited old farmers who had fought in the Revolution to pass the evening with him. They described

some of the battles which are incorporated in this novel.

"The Spy," published in 1822, became "an instant success and one of the first American novels of its kind to attract attention at home and abroad. With it James Fenimore Cooper became famous. Critics said that it ranked with Sir Walter Scott's "Waverly." Harvey Birch, the spy, is one of the most memorable fiction characters which have been created in American literature."

Cooper's next book was "The Pioneer," published in 1823. Most of the scenes are laid at Cooperstown on Lake Otsego. Susan Cooper tells us that, while the plot is purely fiction, some of the characters were drawn from real life.

As was quite natural, Cooper, now known as a successful author, drifted from the tales he had been writing into elaborations of the stories read or told to him in his boyhood. His famous "The Last of the Mohicans" was published in 1826; "The Prairie" in 1827; and "The Red Rover" in 1828.

Cooper spent seven years living in the leading European capitals where he received much attention. His association as a student with Dr. Ellison, the young rector of St. Peter's in Albany, had a great effect upon his character and style of writing.

"Dr. Ellison was cultured, refined, and highly educated," wrote Emma Gary Wallace. "But possessed of un-American ideals, he had not yet assimilated democracy as we know it. Young Cooper was a good deal of an aristocrat at heart, and so took kindly to his tutor's teachings as to class differences of wealth and position. So perhaps this led to Cooper's frankness later in telling his countrymen of their faults which often aroused resentment against him. He was often indiscreet in his criticisms, and he was not well understood."

Another installment of this sketch of Cooper will appear in a future number of the Round-Up.

THE HARKAWAY BUSINESS

It appears that the famous London publisher, Edwin J. Brett, who called his business place "Harkaway House," did not recognize any of the Harkaway books printed in the U. S. except

the first set which he printed in 14 books ending with Jack Harkaway and His Boy Tinker. Donohue printed the set 15 books, and Street & Smith at first in 25. Brett also had Young Jack Harkaway's Schooldays, Jack Harkaway and the Pirates, and Jack Harkaway at the Isle of Palms. This last was the last printed in this country and was in Frank Leslie's Girls' and Boys' Weekly in 1878-9. I read it there. I read the next Harkaways of the after English series or fourth set in book form, Jack Harkaway in the Transvaal, and Jack Harkaway's War Scouts. Also in British Boys I read Jack Harkaway in the Life Guards. Heming then began writing of Jack Harkaway's grandson, another Jack. In Boys of the Empire I read the synopsis of the first which was Harkaway the Third and introduced the next story of The Bandits of Tarragona, and its sequel was The Naval Cadets, only partly I read of this, about the Third Jack and his chum a Third Harry Girdwood and their adventures, etc. at Southsea. This is as far as I have gotten in the Harkaway business. It seems the second set of Harkaways only Frank Tousey printed in his 5 cent Wide Awake Library as he also had the first set. Beadle's printed at least one Harkaway story, Jack Harkaway in New York in one of his library "pamphlets."

So far as I know Brett didn't print any of the 15 other stories purported to be by Bracebridge Heming, two of which I read in Frank Leslie's Girls and Boys Weekly in 1878-9, Home Base, or Jack the Pitcher, and Spider and Stump and the sequel The Boy Boss or the Hidden Fortune, which last Street & Smith didn't print of the 15, others being Will Wilding, Larry O'Keefe, Billy Barlow, Sam Sawbones, Mischievous Matt (2 books), The Fool of the Family, Too Fast to Last, Out for Fun, Fatherless Bob (2 books), and Rob Rollalong (2 books). I don't know if Heming wrote any of these books, they have his name, but seemingly were not printed in England.

I think the first Harkaway story was in Boys of England, printed by Brett, about 1871, and he printed all the rest by the real Heming. Who the American "Heming" was or were I

do not know. Anyway they are, baring a few discrepancies, very good stories even for an Old Boy like me, to read.

U. G. Figley, Bryan, Ohio.

P. S.—Every time Street & Smith printed Jack Harkaway at the Isle of Palms, why did they omit one of the best chapters? Where was the second series of Harkaways printed before Frank Tousey printed them in his 5 cent Wide Awake Library? Also where in America was Heming's three Dick Lightheart stories before Tousey printed them in that Library? Brett printed them in his set of boys' stories. Who was it or who were the gentlemen who wrote a lot of the Harkaways?

NEWSIES AND NOTES

By Ralph F. Cummings

Richard K. Fox of Police Gazette fame, has a full page picture of himself in the Police Gazette for Aug. 25, 1883.

Gustave Aimard, whose real name was Oliver Glore, wrote many stories in Beadles novels and story papers, as well as other publications. This Frenchman spent 20 years of his life in our Southwest, living with the Redskins.

Lewis J. Gardner wrote under the pen names of Andrew Dearborn and Lewis J. Swift, in Beadles Dime Novels, and Munro's Ten Cent Novels. Mr. Gardner was born in Hebron, N. Y. April 13, 1836, and died in Williamstown, Mass., Dec. 5th, 1909. Burial was in So. Williamstown. Thanks to his daughter, Mrs. George W. Smith of Williamstown for this information.

Mr. Gardner wrote very few stories, but those he did write were fine ones. He wrote two for Beadles Dime Novels, called "Scarred Eagle," and "White Serpent," and "The Wabash Rangers" for Munro's Ten Cent Novels.

Another account that Margaret Fuller, teacher, writer, critic, literature and art, was born May 23, 1810, and died in a ship wreck July 19th, 1850. See Round-Up, same column, for December 1942. I'm told both are the real thing, so I'm wondering which is right.

Phillips Brooks, bookwriter, was born Dec. 13, 1835. Died Jan. 23rd, 1893.

Theodore Thomas, symphony orchestra leader, born 1835. Died 1905.

Jane C. Austin, who wrote for Bal-lou's and the Chimney Corner, was born Feb. 25th, 1830. Died March 30th, 1894. She wrote a lot of Revolutionary War stories.

Weekly Story Teller was published by Norman L. Munro. 1st issue, Vol. 1, No. 22, 1875, were—Agatha, or Heiress of Cope Hall by Eva Evergreen; Dell's Victory, or the Diamond Cross by Louise C. McCarthy; Led Astray, or A Wife's Error by Helen M. Lewis. A novel written from Dian Bousecant play of "Led Astray," John F. Cowan; ("Elsie Snowe") one of Elizabeth Winter's pen names—she was wife of Wm. Winter, the dramatic critic and mother of Percy Winter, the actor. She also wrote under the name of Elizabeth Campbell.

Julia Ward Howe, another great writer, born May 27th, 1819. Died Oct. 10th, 1910.

A stump of petrified wood, 4 feet high, and a foot and a half thick is the tombstone for Percival Lowell, astronomer. He died in the petrified forest at Flagstaff, Arizona.

Francis W. Doughty, author of the Old and Young King Brady stories, wrote under the pen names of "A New York Detective," and "An Old Miner."

NEWSY NEWS

By Ye Editor

Say, have you seen Ed Morrill's catalogue on Old Dime Novels? I think it's a fine get up on the old timers of long ago. Should have written more about this fine get-up of Beadles Dime Novels in my December Number of the Round-Up, but I hadn't had a chance to lay my peepers on it, till after I'd sent the Round-Up to press. It is a deep red color, just like the old Beadles when they first came off the press in 1860. Size 6x9½ inches, 16 pages; and the data alone is worth any one's collection. The prices run from \$3.00 up. Mr. Morrill spent a lot of time on getting his masterpiece on the old Beadles Dime Novels together, in such a beautiful booklet as this. Some of the novels therein, are very scarce, and not to be had at any price, elsewhere. But Morrill has them, such as Beadles Dime Novels, Dime Tales, American Tales, DeWitt's Ten Cent Romances, Novelettes, Frank Starr's, Munro's,

Irwin's American Novels. A pretty slick article, I think. Write to Ed Morrill, 144 Kingston St., Boston, Mass.

Who knows of the whereabouts of Robert M. Rowan formerly of Clarksburg, W. Va., and Win Erbe of New York City?

More sad news. We hear that Charles Jonas, H. O. Rawson and Mrs. Marie L. Bendig have lost their dear sisters, soon after ye editor's great loss. May their souls rest in peace and their troubles and cares which are over, and that they are happy in Heaven, with our Dear Lord, God bless them.

George Barton says—

He saw No. 2 of Yankee 5c Library when he was a kid—The Escape of Jocko Kelly and the Sewer Gang from State's Prison—never forgot it. Got quite a kick out of reading this one. Pretty crude stuff, altho interesting—not in a class with other novels printed at that time.

Union Jack—Started about 1894 as a 16-page half-penny weekly with a slightly violet cover, illustration and mast head a dark purple. Cover was changed in color from time to time. Each issue contained a complete novel with two or more pen and ink illustrations per story. The famous "Tom Browne" got his first start on these illustrations. Stories of all kinds, adventure, pirate, school, mystery—and they were good stories too. I know for I had Nos. 52 to 156 in bound volumes. There was always a serial story running too—complete yarn, 12 to 14 pages, serial two to four. Usually an editorial page or column was included. Sexton Blake was first introduced to the world in its pages around 1895, author given as W. Rae Shaw. After about No. 360 it was changed to a 32-page paper with additional cover—a pink paper with black illustration and masthead. For a time, each number contained a complete novel of adventure, but evidently the demand for Sexton Blake became so great that after a short time, the U. J. was devoted to his exploits entirely until the end of its publication. It was a great paper and had a good long run. The Sexton Blake stories were deservedly popular, and the authors who wrote them never allowed themselves to go stale—evidently there was quite a rivalry among them to see who could

do the best job with the characters. There was always a serial running in the penny edition, usually a reprint of one that had previously appeared in the Boys' Friend, Herald or Realm. Well illustrated too—a feature that our own novels never had. I read all of Harmsworth's boys' papers from 1900 on. There were none better—mainly stirring stories and articles—after 1912 or so they lost some of their virility, the authors not seeming to have the punch of the older men. I think that the first 50 or 60 numbers of the "Champion" were run by old timers as the get-up was similar in editorial arrangement and material to a famous old timer "Big Budget."

I think that popular papers for the young have reached an all time low in the present day so-called "Comics." If one of our novel publishers had gone so outrageously blood thirsty and had such impossible heroes in his novels he would have been run out of business. I wouldn't swap one good Wide Awake, Pluck & Luck, etc. for a dozen of the things.

Ye editor is working in a woolen mill now. Have been since October, so if you don't hear from me, don't get nervous, as I'll write you as quick as I can. Got to do my bit, if I can, you know, as you all are doing in some way or another, and Oh yes, if the Round-Up comes in very late at times, don't blame us, blame it on the war, as my printer is so short handed, he has to do the printing alone, and that takes time, and the mails are so uncertain, too. If you happen to miss out on a Number, drop me a card, and I'll send it on to you as quickly as I can. The war has gotten us so, we don't know which end we are on, but we'll do the best we know how, to serve you all. My desk is piled high with unanswered letters, and as soon as I can I will answer every one of them, but its going to take time. After work, you come home all tired out, ready for bed. Then it's get up and go to work again. My job at the mill is washing floors, and plenty of it too. We got to keep 'em clean for the real workers who are getting out the defense orders, you know.

If you boys send in for any orders of novels, etc., I will fill them, if I can, right away. But don't expect a letter, as I'll write when I can, unless it's important.

I can use 10c and 25c War Saving stamps instead of cash, say \$3.00 or under.

Here's what interests us too. Ned Buntline's Own Series, No. 4 (the only one I have) complete. No date, but believe around the early 60s, published by Hilton & Co., 128 Nassau St., New York, N. Y. Light yellow covers, size 6x9 inches, 95 reading pages, title: Cara St. John, or the Mystery Solved. Illustration on front cover only, sold for 25c. Picture on cover shows a lot of people around a big table, and a girl comes thru the door on horseback, and jumps over the middle of the table. Sure is exciting. Everybody has heart failure, or very near it, at that moment.

So Long Pals, until next time.
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.

Reckless Ralph Cummings.

PARTIAL LIST OF ALL 1943 H. H. BRO. MEMBERS

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1. Ralph F. Cummings, Fisherville, Mass., Ye President of H. H. B.
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60. Albert Johannsen, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
67. S. B. Condon, So. Penabscot, Me.
77. Joseph Krajic, 1433 Scoville Ave., S. W. Canton, Ohio.
83. Prof. O. A. Johannsen, 203 Park-way, Ithaca, N. Y. (new member).
123. Herman Pitcher, 626 Baya Ave., Lake City, Florida.
153. Clinton B. Goodwin, So. Ashburnham, Mass. (new member).

Prof. O. A. Johannsen and Clinton B. Goodwin are new members of the fold. The Prof. seems to like the good old Frank Leslie's publications, while Clinton likes the Frank Tousey's. Let's get acquainted.

Complete list of all 1942 H. H. Bro. Members in the February Number.

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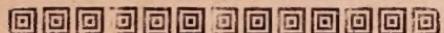
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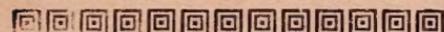
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